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THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

DECEMBER, 1912

EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

On October 17 New York state dedicated in Albany a building which is to be devoted to the business of the State Department of Education. The first floor is given over to administrative offices. On the floor above is a vaulted corridor leading to a reference reading-room. There are libraries of medicine, law, and legislation, and there is a periodical room connected with these libraries.

New York State Educational Building The building has already cost five and a half millions of dollars. It is a monument to the most highly centralized and fully developed educational department in any state in the Union.

The ceremonies of dedication were preceded by an elaborate educational program. On Tuesday the first part of the program was devoted to the discussion of problems relating to libraries and museums. In the afternoon elementary and secondary education were the topics. On Wednesday educational extension and private schools were taken up in the forenoon, and universities and professional schools were discussed in the afternoon.

The program indicates the range of interest which is served by the Department of Education of New York state. More than any other state department, this deals with the whole range of public education. The material expression of New York's interest in education, in this building, will undoubtedly draw the attention of other states to the importance of organizing in a more complete way their educational work. A central office which is not relegated to some remote corner of the state house, but is a place to which all of the school and college officers of the state may go for con-

ferences and for material which will help them in their work, is certainly an indication of the type of attitude which must be taken toward education.

The federal government might with propriety be called upon to take note of the wisdom of following the example of New York state in this matter.

A preliminary announcement is made of the session of the Department of Superintendence. The Department will meet in Philadelphia on February 25. The meeting will continue during the remainder of the week. This date is set at a time which will make it possible for the members of the department to go on to Washington and attend the inauguration ceremonies.

A number of affiliated organizations will meet with the department. Among these are the National Society for the Scientific Study of Education, the College Teachers of Education, the National Association of School Accounting Officers, the Kindergarten Section of the National Association, and the Department of Higher Education. Announcement is also made that the National Council of Education will meet at this time.

The session on Tuesday, February 25, will be given to the National Council. On Wednesday there will be a forenoon meeting occupied by the preliminary exercises, including addresses of welcome. These will be followed by a discussion of "Team Play between Schoolmaster and Layman," by Mr. Prosser, and "Team Play between City Superintendent and City," by Mr. Cary. In the afternoon there will be a discussion of uniform standardization in school administration, curriculum, etc. The members of the program who have already consented to take part are Mr. Draper and Mr. McMurry. In the evening there will be a paper on the "Development of Professional Spirit and Initiative of Teachers," by Mr. Judd, and a paper on "Rhythm in Education," by Mr. Joseph Lee. In all probability the Commissioner of Education of the United States will also appear at this time.

The Thursday forenoon program will be devoted to a discussion of "The Outcome of a Few Experiments in Developing a School System." A number of practical men are to appear in this dis-

cussion: Superintendent Meek, Superintendent Condon, Superintendent Francis, and others.

The business meeting of the department will be held at 11 o'clock on Thursday. In the afternoon there will be round tables and departmental meetings. There will be a round table for superintendents of large cities, conducted by Superintendent Edson; a round table for state and county superintendents conducted under the presidency of Mr. Blair of Illinois. The round table for superintendents of small cities will be conducted by Mr. Gruff, of Omaha.

In the evening Mr. Schaeffer will deliver an address on "Limitations of Examinations," and David Starr Jordan will speak on "Ideals."

Friday forenoon will be used for the reports of committees. The committee which was appointed to investigate the cost of living and the salaries of teachers will make a report, and the committee which is to discuss Economy of Time in the Elementary School will also make a report.

In the afternoon the subject will be the "Testing of Efficiency of School Administration." Messrs. Hanus, Bailey, and Spaulding, and others will appear on this program.

The Bureau of Education of the United States has never been more active than it is at the present time in distributing educational information to students and school officers throughout the United States. A recent note from the Bureau calls attention to the fact that the Bureau is now prepared to accommodate commissions and committees appointed by state boards of education and by local associations for the purpose of investigating particular phases of education. Committees and commissions will be provided with a place to work and will, so far as possible, be aided in pursuing investigations through the library of the Bureau. Further than this, the Bureau is prepared to co-operate with such committees and commissions in collecting information from all parts of the country. The department has the advantage of being able to frank its communications, and can in this way collect information which would be very expensive if it were brought together by a separate commission.

**Research Aids
Offered by
Bureau of
Education**

Furthermore, the Bureau is prepared to supply documents from its library to individuals who are at work at home. These individuals can borrow, through institutional or public libraries, the works which the Bureau has carefully collected, including a large number of textbooks. For example, anyone who is about to prepare a textbook on any subject can thus secure the benefit of the example of many other books which have gone before in that particular field.

A monthly bulletin is issued by the Bureau, giving a full record of current educational publications. This bulletin should be in the hands of every school official. The articles and books which come out during the month are referred to, and in many cases epitomized in such a way that the student can find through these references whether the book is one that he should secure for his own personal use.

Comment is made in two newspapers on the experience of New York City which results from the passing of the equal-pay law.

Comments on Equal Pay in New York The *Detroit Free Press* of October 24 writes as follows: "Application of the principle of equal pay for men and women has had the inevitable result in New York City. It has practically driven men out of the field. The school authorities find themselves unable to increase the pay of the women to the amount that had been received by the men, and the only thing they can do is to reduce the salaries of the men. The latter cannot support themselves and their families on the lessened stipend, which is quite adequate for the maintenance of a single woman. The result may bring a little selfish gratification to women teachers, for in the readjustment they have gained somewhat at the expense of their male associates, but it means grievous loss to the school system."

The editorial continues to comment on the impossibility of maintaining the teaching staff as it was constituted before this legislation was passed.

The *Boston Transcript* referring to the same matter, writes as follows: "New York City is now reaping the full fruits of the equal-pay policy that a yielding legislature and school board put into

effect in the public schools. Feminization, the evils of which have so often been pointed out, is virtually a fact, and it will probably be many many years before any movement in the opposite direction is instituted. In the list of teachers now eligible for appointment there are the names of six hundred and eighty-eight women, and of not a single man, and this situation is not an accident. It is the result of the operation of inflexible economic laws. Everyone connected with the vicious equal-pay proposition, which raises women's salaries by reducing those of men, was warned long in advance of the certain results."

These two quotations are cited not for the purpose of advocating or answering the conclusions which are there set forth. They are quoted because they represent very definitely the reaction of two leading newspapers upon the situation which has arisen in New York City. It may and it may not be advantageous for the number of women to increase in the schools. Many superintendents would be perfectly clear that it is better to have a well qualified woman than a badly qualified man, and they may be prepared to support, as a legitimate matter of school policy, the maintenance of a faculty made up primarily of strong women who can receive an adequate salary, rather than of a mixture of men and women, both of whom receive inadequate pay. But the fact is that the people who support the schools are interested in the outcome of such legislation as that which was carried through in New York City, and the attitude of other communities will be based upon the experience of New York City, and upon the comments which are reported in the public press.

An experiment in normal extension work is being tried by the State Normal School at Macomb, Ill. There go out from this **Normal Extension** normal school instructors who conduct in the neighboring cities and towns extension courses for teachers. The work of the normal school is in this way brought to the teachers who are in the field and who are not able to suspend their regular duties for the purpose of study at the institution itself. Bulletins are issued in which outline courses are presented; these outlines are used in connection with certain textbooks which

are to be read by the students, and lectures which are given by members of the normal-school staff. The teachers in the neighboring towns are able through such courses to secure certificates and credentials from the normal school which they were not able to secure as students before entering upon their professional work.

The effort of public institutions to spread their influence through the organization of extension work is exhibited in many of the higher institutions, especially in the state universities in the Middle West. There is certainly no reason why the normal school should not serve its territory in the same way, and the discovery of this method of enlarging the range of influence of the normal school is an important addition to normal-school organization.

The National Association of Audubon Societies calls attention to the fact that it has a considerable sum of money to expend in

Material for Bird-Study distributing literature and pictures which shall promote the study of birds in the public schools. The association is prepared to send the magazine *Bird Lore*, the usual cost of which is one dollar, to any teacher who will make application and show that she is able to make use of this publication for work in the school. Other material, such as pictures to be used in connection with the work of the school, will also be supplied on application.

Anyone desiring further information about this offer is recommended to write to Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, secretary of the association, at 1974 Broadway, New York City.

The Bureau of Education sends the following news item: "The state of Minnesota has engaged Dr. Ernest B. Hoag, a health

Public Health expert, to travel about the state and demonstrate to the citizens that rational conservation of the mental

and physical health of children is possible and practicable with the means already at hand. Three plans are proposed: (1) organization with a medical officer and a nurse or nurses; (2) organization with a school nurse or nurses only; (3) organization by the employment of a simple non-medical health-survey on the part of the teacher only. To make it possible for every com-

munity, however small, to possess the necessary technical knowledge, the State Board of Health will maintain at the state capital a "clearing-house of information concerning child hygiene, medical supervision, the teaching of school hygiene, and the like."

This action on the part of the state of Minnesota is a clear indication that the public is coming to recognize that the prevention of disease is more economical than the cure of disease. The whole matter of public health is a matter of education and public organization.

A conference was held in New York City on October 23 to 26, dealing with the general problem of vocational guidance. There was an exhibit of material on vocational guidance in the New York Public Library, and addresses were made by numerous workers who are interested in developing a better system of vocational guidance in the public schools.

Vocational Guidance The arguments in favor of vocational guidance are sufficiently familiar, so that we need not at this time report that phase of the discussion. A suggestion which ought to stimulate study was made by one of the speakers who pointed out that no teacher in New York City, or anywhere else, has the right to attempt to guide a child in the choice of his life-work, since there is no adequate knowledge of the relation between certain specialized forms of capacity, and the demands for certain trades. This fact that we do not know now how to direct children should be the strongest possible stimulus toward investigation of this problem. It ought to be possible to discover, in the first place, by an examination of the various trades, what qualities are needed, and in the second place it ought to be possible to discover which children in the school have those qualities that will best prepare them for special lines of work. This kind of an investigation offers an inviting field to the scientifically trained student of education who is also engaged in giving instruction in the schools. This is one of the problems which is not a problem of subject-matter at all, but must be recognized by teachers as a legitimate field for the exercise of the best possible scientific training.

Professor John R. Commons, a member of the Wisconsin Industrial Commission, proposes that the school-houses shall be used as **Employment Bureaus in Schools** vocational bureaus; that boys and girls on the one hand, and adults on the other, shall find here an opportunity to register for employment. Giving Mr. Commons' own statement of the case, it may be said: "There is need of an organized market for labor. If each public school-house had a director of its social-center service, he would be supplied with blanks from the main employment office. A workman, by going to the school nearest his house of residence, could immediately be connected with the whole organized labor market of the state."

This suggestion for the extension of social-center work and the development of the vocational-guidance work through the school, is justified by the experience of teachers who know that without formal organization of the movement schools now serve as centers where employers often find those who fill the places which they have vacant.

Two news items call attention to the probable importance in the future of moving pictures in the city schools. The Brooklyn **Moving Pictures** Teachers' Association held an exhibit to test the success of moving pictures, and many of the members of the association came to the conclusion that these pictures could be used with very great advantage in the ordinary work of the school. Much science material and much geographical material certainly can be presented in this way better than in any other way. The Bureau of Education also calls attention to the fact that the use of moving pictures in education has had a real impetus in German official circles. The Prussian minister of education is considering the feasibility of employing moving pictures in certain courses in higher educational institutions, and a number of film manufacturers are being given an opportunity to show the authorities what films they have that can be adapted to educational purposes.

The use of the moving picture in schools has become common in the schools of Gary, and has frequently been commented upon

as an important part of the work in those schools. One of the principals in a school in Paterson, N.J., gives an account of competition in kind which he felt called upon to carry on against the moving-picture show which established itself immediately across the street from the school building.

All these cases go to show the importance not only of acquiring new methods of presenting interesting material to children in the schools, but also the importance of preparing children to appreciate proper kinds of recreation material.

The issue of whether or not free textbooks shall be supplied to the children of the Indiana schools was one of the important matters

Free Textbooks discussed in the recent campaign. Senator Beveridge advocated the giving of free textbooks to all the children in the public schools of Indiana. It was replied that this would increase the tax levy upon the state to such an extent that it would jeopardize the school work. It was replied again in answer to this objection that the distribution of expense for the conduct of public schools is a legitimate charge upon all the people in the state, whether or not they send children to the schools, and that the cost of textbooks is a part of this necessary public expense.

In the state of California the matter was a subject of vigorous discussion in terms of a constitutional amendment which was proposed in that state. It was argued there that the chief objection to the use of public textbooks is to be found in the fact that disease is spread by passing books around from family to family. It was also argued that better textbooks can be made by independent book companies in competition with each other than can be manufactured by the state department.

In the city of Cleveland the same general question has come up in a somewhat different form. The discussion in Cleveland, however, was not carried on so much with regard to the merits of the case for and against free textbooks, as in terms of a very heated political discussion which has followed the reorganization of the school system. In that controversy one of the labor unions took a hand because of its interest in the methods of manufacturing textbooks.

These various indications show the keen interest of the public in the matter of textbooks, and raise several questions which sooner or later will have to be met in all of the different states. The disadvantages of public textbooks, and the advantages, on the other hand, of supplying everybody with textbooks free of cost to the individual family, certainly must be regarded as a part of the problem of public education.

The Training School for Public Service has prepared a report on the conditions and needs of the rural schools of Wisconsin. This **Rural Schools of Wisconsin** report opens with a brief general statement of the factors which make for progress in rural schools. Following upon this statement is a careful analysis of a number of cases of school expenditures throughout the various districts of the state. These studies of the actual practices of the small rural school boards indicate that there is a large amount of petty graft and irregularity in the work of these school boards. Accounts are evidently kept very loosely in many districts, and charges are made which do not seem to be justified when one studies the actual needs of the schools.

Later in the report matters of instruction and supervision are taken up in detail. Facts are brought out which are of importance not only to Wisconsin, but to students of rural education in all parts of the country. For example, it is shown that out of 128 teachers visited and reported on, 56 had taught in their present schools less than one year, 39 had taught one year, 20 had taught two years, 9 had taught 3 years, and only 4 had taught for four years or more. This shows that the rural school certainly has in the districts canvassed no continuity of purpose or control.

The number of visits of supervision made at the different schools is also a matter of interest. Out of 131 schools 17 were not visited during the year by either state inspector or county superintendent; 66 were visited once by the county superintendent, 30 were visited twice by the county superintendent, 8 were visited by the state school inspector, and 18 were unable to supply information with regard to supervision.